

R 221214Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6379  
INFO SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 001028

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/21/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: PATRIOTIC FRONT OFFICIAL ALLEGES ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION MALFEASANCE (C)

REF: LUSAKA 1023

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Booth, Reason 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) Summary and Comment: The opposition Patriotic Front (PF) has serious concerns about the Electoral Commission of Zambia's (ECZ) handling of the October 30 presidential by-election, according to Secretary General Edward Mumbi. Mumbi claims the ballot printing operation was open to fraud, noting that he and other party representatives were not allowed to view the printing of numbered ballots, despite promises to the contrary. Mumbi further noted that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) decision to print 600,000 extra ballots was taken without consultation with opposition parties. Mumbi also claimed the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) is working with the ECZ to stuff ballot boxes, passing Poloffs a spreadsheet -- allegedly given to him by a party operative inside the ECZ -- showing ten constituencies where over 100,000 total votes are to be added to the MMD's total. We do not believe this to be credible (see para 7). While there are shortcomings related to ballot printing, extra ballots and publication of results at the polling station level, the gross vote rigging alleged by PF is likely a tactic to position itself to contest the results should PF not win. End summary.

-----  
Ballot Printing Irregularities Alleged...  
-----

¶2. (C) In an October 21 meeting with Poloffs, Secretary General Edward Mumbi said that the ECZ badly mishandled the printing of ballots for the presidential by-election, leaving the process open to fraud. Mumbi and other party representatives visited the ballot's printer, Uniprint, in Durban, South Africa from October 2-8 in order to examine the process by which the ballots were prepared and watch the numbered ballots being printed on October 6th.

¶3. (C) The visit, however, did not proceed as planned. According to Mumbi, he and other representatives were told on the 6th that they would not see the ballots printed that day. When they returned to Uniprint's offices on the 7th, the Uniprint consultant told them that three million of the ballots (approximately two-thirds) had been printed the previous day with no party reps present. Mumbi and the others were not allowed to examine the ballots, as they had already been packaged. Hence, Mumbi noted, the reps were unable to verify that the ballots had been properly serial numbered, leaving the door open to electoral fraud.

¶4. (C) Mumbi also expressed concern at the ECZ's unilateral decision to print 600,000 extra ballots in addition to the approximately four million needed for the election. The parties had never agreed to such a large number, believing that only a few thousand extras (largely for spoiled votes due to voter error) were necessary, given that voter turnout is unlikely to be more than the nearly 2.8 million who voted in 2006. (Note: The ECZ announced October 21 that the parties had agreed nearly all of the extra ballots would be kept in Lusaka rather than distributed to districts, a move that limits the possibility for electoral skullduggery. A Zambian Air Force aircraft will be on standby for delivering the extra ballots if needed. End note.)

-----  
...As Well As Outright Ballot Box Stuffing  
-----

¶5. (C) Mumbi then produced to Poloffs a document that he claims was given to him by a PF operative within the ECZ. The spreadsheet listed all of Zambia's 150 constituencies (except for those of Southern Province, which were missing), and next to ten of them were bold font print notations -- allegedly from ECZ officials -- claiming that votes would be added for MMD candidate Rupiah Banda, sometimes identifying specific polling areas where the votes would come from. The constituencies and alleged MMD votes were:

--Vubwi (Eastern Province)	9,000
--Milanzi (Eastern Province)	10,679
--Mkaika (Eastern Province)	8,500
--Lundazi (Eastern Province)	11,600
--Malambo (Eastern Province)	4,543
--Mpongwe (Copperbelt Province)	12,765
--Nchelenge (Luapula Province)	10,098
--Chienge (Luapula Province)	12,780
--Mumbwa (Central Province)	11,009
--Chisamba (Central Province)	15,980

-----  
National Party Agent Presence Uncertain  
-----

¶6. (C) When asked whether PF would be able to deploy party agents to all of the country's 6,456 polling stations -- a move that would all but negate the possibility of large-scale fraud -- Mumbi was non-committal. While he said that the party had more than enough interested volunteers, it was unclear at this point whether the party would have enough money to pay and transport them, particularly to more rural parts of the country. When pressed as to how much of the country Mumbi thought PF would be likely to cover, the Secretary General did not supply a straight answer.

-----  
Comment  
-----

¶7. (C) The numbers provided by Mumbi, when compared to results of the 2006 presidential election, appear rather fantastical. In seven of the ten constituencies, the votes allegedly to be stuffed for the MMD this year dwarf the totals late President Mwanawasa won as the MMD candidate in ¶2006. In Vubwi, just over 9,000 votes were tallied for all candidates in 2006, making it very difficult for anyone to stuff 9,000 additional votes into the ballot box with any believability. Furthermore, the PF was trounced by both the MMD and United Party for National Development (UPND) in all but the two Luapula Province constituencies, suggesting the numbers could be manufactured to save face ahead of a likely crushing defeat in those constituencies. Nevertheless, we will keep an eye on the constituencies in question in the unlikely event that this year's results look drastically different than those of 2006.

¶8. (C) Mumbi's claims of ballot stuffing and printing opacity, however, neglect a more likely issue of concern--the ECZ's refusal to publish station-by-station polling results. If there is interference in the vote-counting process, the most likely place for it to happen is when ballot boxes are transported between the polling stations and the district collating centers. Without a nationwide polling station presence, the PF will be unable to verify that polling station numbers add up through a parallel vote count. Of course, this also could be part of the PF's own plan, using fictitious resource constraints as an excuse for not deploying agents to constituencies where they know the MMD or UPND are likely to dominate, allowing them to lay the foundation for claims of electoral malfeasance. Given the rather outrageous and unsubstantiated stuffing allegations already made, the latter scenario could very well be the case.

BOOTH